


3.4 Three sets of morals

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An understanding of the origin and structure of morals is of central importance to understand the psychology of geopolitics because it determines what type of behavior people prefer and is acceptable for them.

Morals

a person's standards of behavior or beliefs concerning what is and is not acceptable for them to do

Virtue

behavior showing high moral standards

Within the context of authoritarians and libertarians the structure of morals is quite simple:

- Authoritarians prefer any type of behavior and any thoughts — of themselves and especially of others — that keeps them feeling adequate. The fearful authoritarian prefers is more extreme in its moral judgement and behavioral preferences: it considers the reduction of societal complexity to within personal coping capacity its upmost priority. As such it is highly suspicious of any behavior, thought pattern, emotions, or ideologies that might lead to more or sustained complexity. It loves all efforts (irrespective its consequences) that is believed to bring world complexity back to within coping capacity.
- Libertarians consider it amoral to pose any unnecessary limits on the behavior of anyone, they consider self-expression and self-development of the highest priority.

These are the moral values that shape geopolitics. In a some more detail, using Stenner's definition "authoritarianism is an individual predisposition concerned with the appropriate balance between group authority and uniformity, on the one

hand, and individual authority and diversity, on the other” as basis [Stenner 2005]{#Stenner:2005ve}].

The moral values that shape geopolitics

Who	Authoritarian agent at coping capacity	Authoritarian agent beyond coping capacity	Libertarian agent
		Reduce world complexity to within coping capacity	Allow and stimulate self-expression and self-development
Good	Norm compliant behavior. Support of authorities in all their efforts. Subtle self-imposed limits on exploration and self-expression; Prevention of harm to others	<i>Actively curtailing individual autonomy;</i> <i>Suppression of diversity; Norm compliant behavior</i> Prevention of harm to ingroup	<i>Increasing individual autonomy and diversity;</i> <i>Independence of thought, opinions, and activities.</i> <i>Freedom of self-initiated activities.</i> Freedom from oppressive authority; Prevention of harm to others
Bad	Norm violating behavior. Challenging, questioning, or ignoring authorities.	<i>Increasing individual autonomy and diversity;</i> <i>Independence of thought, opinions, and activities. Freedom of self-initiated activities;</i> Unsupported authorities.	<i>Actively curtailing individual autonomy;</i> <i>Suppression of diversity;</i> <i>Norm compliant behavior</i> with adverse consequences on others

Note the almost perfectly anti-symmetry in (italic) between the fearful authoritarian (who is pushed beyond coping capacity) and the libertarian. The differences from perfect symmetry are indicated in bold, these obscure the clear opposites in moral preference.

The authoritarian dynamic entails that the behavior of the authoritarian majority of modern civilizations can be manipulated by simply introducing believable threats that activate fear. All of a sudden this (now fearful) majority turns into a social control force that is highly motivated to curtail particular types of behavior. Authorities that control societal fears are therefore extremely powerful.

Controlling and fine-tuning societal fear (of communism, terrorism, Islam, homosexuality, environmental pollution, climate change, economic collapse, etc.) might be the most powerful social control mechanism in existence. And given the fact that the aristocracy has always been in the business of being in charge, especially in the military, they are likely to have discovered this long ago. In fact they might have used this dynamic for millennia to transit societies between closed, dictatorial, static, and militarist forms of state to an open, democratic, developing, and economically successful forms of state.